



**STATE OF HAWAII  
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**

**Food, Water and Hygiene in Disaster**

***How to Store Food Safely***

Your refrigerator will keep foods cool for about 4 hours without power if it is unopened. Add block or dry ice to your refrigerator if the electricity will be off longer than four hours.

Thawed food can usually be eaten if it is still "refrigerator cold," or re-frozen if it still contains ice crystals. Discard any food that has been at temperatures greater than 45 degrees Fahrenheit for 2 hours or more, and any food that has an unusual odor, color, or texture. **When in doubt, throw it out!**

While the power is out, keep the refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible to keep food cold for as long as possible.

If the power is out for longer than 4 hours, follow the guidelines below:

- Use dry ice, if available. 25 pounds of dry ice will keep a ten-cubic-foot freezer below freezing for 3-4 days. Use care when handling dry ice, and wear dry, heavy gloves to avoid injury.
- For the freezer section: A freezer that is half full will hold food safely for up to 24 hours. A full freezer will hold food safely for 48 hours. Do not open the freezer door if you can avoid it.
- Place perishable items such as milk, dairy products, meat, fish and eggs into a cooler surrounded by ice. Food that is held at 45 degrees Fahrenheit for more than 2 hours should be discarded.
- If you are able, use a thermometer to check the temperature of your food right before you cook or eat it. Throw away any food that has a temperature of more than 45 degrees Fahrenheit.

***Handwashing in Emergency Situations***

After an emergency, it can be difficult to find running water. However, it is still important to wash your hands to avoid illness. It is best to wash your hands with soap and water but when water isn't available, you can use alcohol-based products made for hand washing.

### ***How to Make Sure Your Water Is Safe***

Disasters, especially if accompanied by a tidal surge or flooding, can contaminate the public water supply. Drinking contaminated water may cause illness. You cannot assume that the water in the hurricane-affected area is safe to drink.

Listen for public announcements to confirm safety of the municipal water supply. Use bottled water for eating or drinking. If you do not have bottled water, and are not sure that your tap water is safe, follow these directions to purify tap water:

- Boil the water vigorously- water should be bubbling and rolling for 1 minute.
- If you can't boil water, add 6 drops of newly purchased, unscented liquid household bleach containing 5% hypochlorite per gallon of water. Stir the bleach and water mixture well, and then let the water stand for 30 minutes before you use it. Note that using bleach will not kill parasitic organisms.
- You also can use water-purifying tablets from your local pharmacy or sporting goods store.
- If the water is muddy or unclear, treat water as directed by a public health official.

Do not allow children to play in floodwater areas. Wash children's hands frequently (always before meals), and do not allow children to play with floodwater-contaminated toys that have not been disinfected. You can disinfect toys using a solution of one cup of bleach in five gallons of water.